

Enhanced High-Rise Design Review Process

What is the Enhanced High-Rise Design Review Process?

The Enhanced High-Rise Design Review Process¹ is a public process that allows staff and decision makers to (1) apply relevant sections of the Downtown Design Guidelines² developed for downtown high-rise housing to high-rise development throughout the City, (2) be advised by the City's Architectural Review Committee (ARC) regarding consistency with relevant sections of the applicable Design Guidelines, and (3) receive community input on proposed high-rise development during both the preliminary review and entitlement phases.

The Enhanced High-Rise Design Review Process provides a forum where developers, design professionals, community members and City staff can work together to ensure that new developments contribute positively to the community. Design review has four principal objectives:

1. To facilitate creative urban development that enhances the character of the city
2. To ensure new development sensitively fits into neighborhoods
3. To provide flexibility in the application of development standards
4. To improve communication and participation among developers, community members, and the City early in the design and location of new development.

The Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement (PBCE) administers the Enhanced High-Rise Design Review Process as part of the development review process for a project proposing buildings 100 feet or greater in height. The Architectural Review Committee reviews each project which is subject to the Enhanced Process, and advises the Director of Planning regarding design. The process also involves noticed community meetings to facilitate public participation. The Director of Planning is the decision maker for high-rise projects that require a Site Development Permit. The City Council is the decision maker for appeals of the Director's decision on a Site Development Permit, as well as any Planned Development Rezoning to allow buildings 100 feet or greater in height.

¹ For additional information, see the City of San Jose website <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/agenda.asp> to view the City Council memorandum regarding the "High-Rise Design Review Process Citywide," City Council Agenda 9-19-06, Item 4.7.

² The Downtown Design Guidelines are available on the City of San Jose Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement website at http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning/design_guidelines/. In June 2004 the City Council adopted the Downtown Design Guidelines to (1) provide a framework for Downtown Architectural Design, (2) encourage creativity, (3) enhance the character of the City, and (4) provide a reasonable degree of certainty for developers, architects, property owners, and citizens.

What projects are subject to the Enhanced High-Rise Design Review Process?

The Enhanced Process applies to projects that propose buildings 100 feet or more in height throughout the City of San Jose. In the Downtown Core Area³ only, the enhanced process also applies to projects that propose:

- Development on a site greater than one acre in size; or
- Buildings 150,000 square feet or more in size; or
- Development that does not conform to any historic design guidelines.⁴

Is the Enhanced High-Rise Design Review Process in addition to any other processes required for my project?

Yes. The Enhanced High-Rise Design Review Process consists of two parts completed during a (1) Comprehensive Preliminary Review or Planned Development Rezoning, and (2) a Site Development Permit or Planned Development Permit.

What is the role of the ARC?

The role of the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) is to advise the Director of Planning regarding a project's site and architectural design, urban context, and consistency with the Downtown Design Guidelines. The ARC consists of five professionals with expertise in architecture, urban design, and building codes. Each ARC member is a paid City consultant selected by the Director of Planning. The ARC is not a City commission like the Planning Commission whose members are appointed by the City Council to make decisions on land use applications, or recommendations on rezoning and General Plan Amendment applications. The Director will usually select three of the five members to review any one particular project depending on their availability.

Where can I find information about the Preliminary Review Process, and the Site Development Permit, Planned Development Rezoning and Permit processes?

The Preliminary Review Application and Information Brochure are both available on the Planning Division website at: www.sanjoseca.gov/planning under "General Public Information." Site Development Permit, and Planned Development Rezoning and Permit applications and information brochures are also available on the Planning Division website at: www.sanjoseca.gov/planning under "General Public Information."

³ The Downtown Core area is depicted in the San Jose 2020 General Plan available on the City of San Jose Planning website at <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning/gp/gptext.asp> Chapter V, Land Use Transportation Diagram, Map 3, Core Area and Frame Boundaries.

⁴ The Downtown/Historic Design Guidelines are available on the City of San Jose Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement website at http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning/design_guidelines/.

What drawings and materials should I submit for the Enhanced High-Rise Design Review Process?

Comprehensive Preliminary Review applications should be submitted in person to the Development Services Center, City Hall **First** Floor, 200 East Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA. Site Development Permit, Planned Development (PD) Rezoning, and PD Permit applications must be submitted by appointment to the Planning Division, City Hall **Third** Floor, 200 East Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA.

For the Enhanced Process⁵, each application should include the following drawings and materials:

1. *Site Plan* drawn to scale depicting:
 - Property lines,
 - Street frontages,
 - Proposed buildings and setback dimensions,
 - Existing buildings on surrounding blocks,
 - Proposed uses, site operation, and physical connections to adjoining properties,
 - Driveway locations,
 - Off-street parking and circulation,
 - Size, species, location, and disposition of existing trees,
 - Landscaping,
 - North arrow, and
 - Graphic scale.
2. *Context Plan*. Context plan depicting the location, height, and use of existing buildings on adjacent blocks surrounding the site.
3. *Photographs of Site and Surroundings*. Photographs showing the existing site and the surrounding neighborhood. Photos should be numbered or graphically linked to the site plan and context plan.
4. *Building Elevations and Cross Sections*. Conceptual building elevations of each side of proposed buildings. Cross sections through both the length and width of proposed buildings.
5. *Floor Plan*. Plan of each floor below and above ground.
6. *Colored Renderings*. Colored renderings to provide a perspective of each proposed building in relation to existing buildings adjoining the project site.
7. *Copies*. Two full size plan sets measuring 24 by 36 inches, and ten bound plan sets measuring 11 by 17 inches.

⁵ Before the ARC meeting, Planning staff will ask the applicant to provide following items:

Study Model. A study model illustrating the project site and surrounding area.

Material and Color Board. A material and color board with samples of building cladding, accent, and glass proposed for the project.

What are the steps in the Enhanced High-Rise Design Review Process?

The Enhanced High-Rise Design Review Process consists of (1) a *mandatory* Comprehensive Preliminary Review unless a Planned Development Rezoning is required, and (2) a Site Development Permit or a Planned Development Permit. A Planning project manager assigned to a specific project will work with the applicant through both stages of the process. A Comprehensive Preliminary Review and a Site Development Permit application must be processed *sequentially* if a project is subject to the Enhanced High-Rise Design Review Process.

Comprehensive Preliminary Review or Planned Development Rezoning Tentative Schedule

Comprehensive Preliminary Review ⁶	Days	Planned Development Rezoning ⁷
File Application	1	File Application
Staff Completeness Letter	30	Staff Completeness Letter
Architectural Review Committee ⁸	40	Architectural Review Committee
Staff Comment Letter	45	Staff Comment Letter
Community Meeting	60	Community Meeting
N/A	120	Historic Landmarks Commission ⁹
N/A	180	Planning Commission

Site Development Permit or Planned Development Permit Tentative Schedule

Site Development Permit	Days	Planned Development Permit
File Application	1	File Application
Staff Completeness Letter	30	Staff Completeness Letter
Architectural Review Committee	40	Architectural Review Committee
Staff Comment Letter	45	Staff Comment Letter
Community Meeting	60	Community Meeting
Historic Landmarks Commission	90	Historic Landmarks Commission
Directors Hearing	120	Directors Hearing

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⁶ **Comprehensive Preliminary Review Target:** 60 days

⁷ **Planned Development Rezoning Target:** 180 days assuming Use of EIR, EIR Addendum, or MND for environmental clearance. Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)

⁸ **Architectural Review Committee.** Staff will schedule a project for the next available ARC when an applicant has submitted adequate drawings and materials. The ARC usually meets on the third Thursday of the month to review up to two projects per meeting. See the section above entitled, "What drawings and materials should I submit for the Enhanced High-Rise Design Review Process?"

⁹ **Historic Landmarks Commission.** Staff will refer a project located within 100 feet of a City Landmark or Contributing Structure to a designated Historic District to the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) for review for conformance with both the Historic Design Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties. For additional information, see <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning/Historic/>.